

# University of Chester



This work has been submitted to ChesterRep – the University of Chester's  
online research repository

<http://chesterrep.openrepository.com>

Author(s): Sam Chadwick

Title: Chester under siege: An old city under fire from a new technology

Date: 2014

Originally published in: Context: The Journal for History & Archaeology  
Postgraduate Students at the University of Chester

Example citation: Chadwick, S. (2014). Chester under siege: An old city under fire  
from a new technology. *Context: The Journal for History & Archaeology*  
*Postgraduate Students at the University of Chester*, 1, 22-30

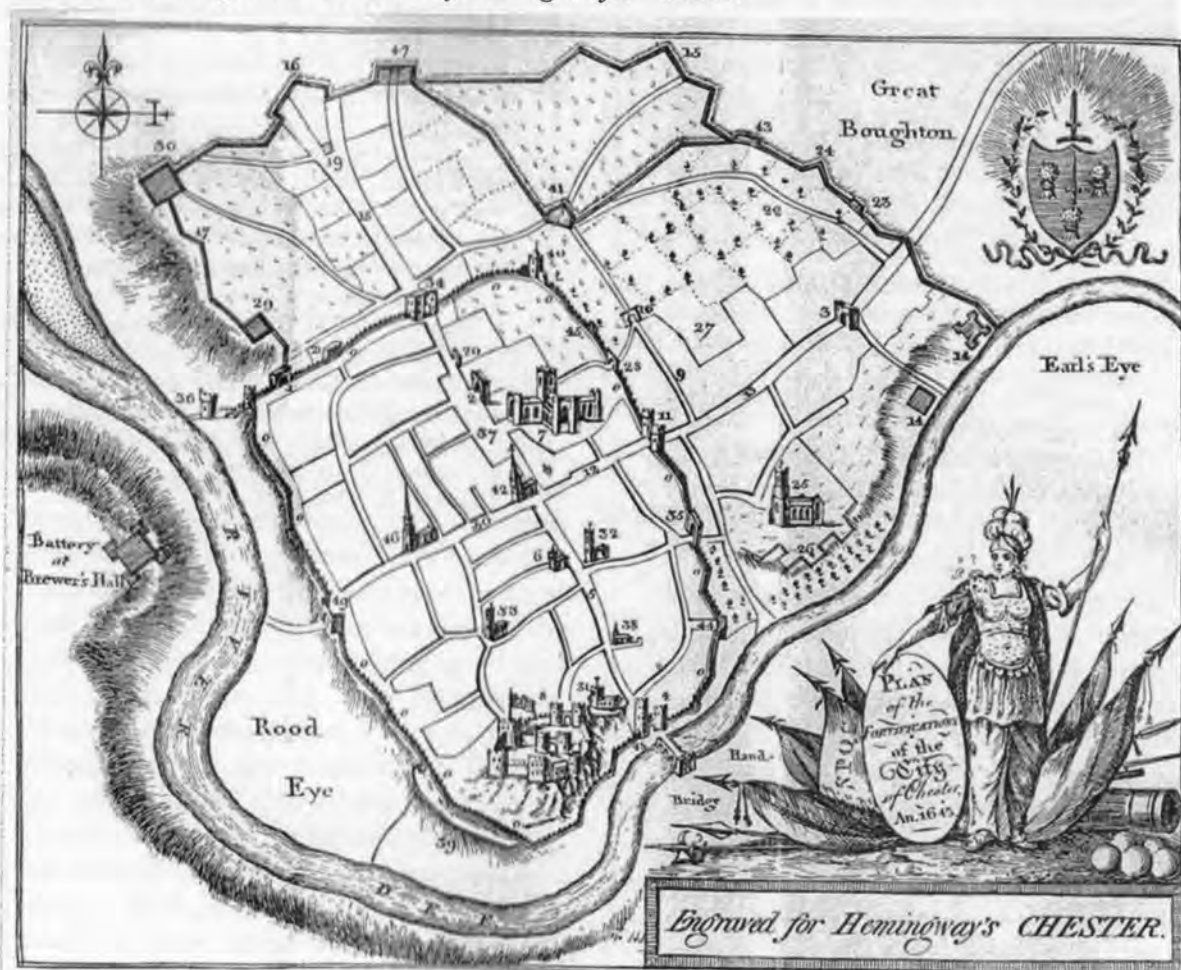
Version of item: Published version

Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10034/338858>

# Chester under Siege: An old city under fire from a new technology

by Sam Chadwick

*The siege of Chester was a key example of the conflict that wracked the kingdom during the English Civil Wars. Early on in the conflict, Chester was a significant location; it was a major port, considered strategically key to Ireland, Wales and the North. Both sides attempted to recruit it to their side of the conflict, in the end the Royalists were successful and it took a long time for the Parliamentarians to finally take the city. During a particularly intense siege, Chester was bombarded by the relatively new, more efficient pieces of artillery. During this conflict, not only were solid cannon shots fired into the walls, but also at the City itself along with mortars firing shells called 'Grenadoes'. By the end of the fighting Chester's place in society was somewhat lower, the city's silver plate had been used up, its populace reduced and starved, becoming vulnerable to society's other great foe – disease.*



Hemingway's Map of Chester in 1645

(Source: Hemingway, J. (1836). Panorama of the City of Chester. Chester: T. Griffiths)

Prior to the commencement of hostilities, Chester was one of the major cities in England. It was a large trading port, had substantial rights and was considered the key to Ireland. It had many links to the Crown including a royal charter in 1506<sup>1</sup>, so perhaps, not surprisingly it became a royalist

stronghold. As a result of the siege by the Parliamentarians, and the plague that struck it in 1647 (where twenty per cent of the remaining population perished)<sup>2</sup>, Chester had deteriorated to such a state that grass was growing in the central streets<sup>3</sup>. The walls around it were originally built during its time



as a Roman Fort. These walls were extended during the medieval period, and Chester Castle was constructed. Though these walls were reinforced during the first English Civil War, they show old-fashioned defences against the new military revolution technology of efficient ordnance and mortars.

Chester was a Royalist city in a Parliamentary county; however it managed to avoid any real involvement in the Civil Wars until January 1643<sup>4</sup>. Ward separates the history of the city's involvement in the Civil Wars into four phases. The first phase lasted from January 1643 to March 1644; for this time period Chester was mostly out of the direct conflict, although Sir William Brereton had taken the rest of the county for Parliament<sup>5</sup>. During this time, a large amount of defensive outworks were built around Chester and its suburbs<sup>6</sup>. The second phase stretched from March 1644 to November 1644, when the defences were shortened and improved by Prince Rupert<sup>7</sup>. The third phase came about following the Royalist's defeat at Montgomery, where a large number of royalist troops were taken out of action. This meant that Lord John Byron was no longer able to meet the Parliamentary forces on the field<sup>8</sup>, and gave Parliament the freedom to begin a siege of the city<sup>9</sup>. There was a partial relief of the siege by Prince Maurice and his men on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1645<sup>10</sup>; however this did not last long as the Parliamentarians took the suburbs of Chester on 20<sup>th</sup> September<sup>11</sup>. The final phase lasted from October 1645 to February 1646. This phase consisted of the main bombardment of Chester and ended with the surrender of Chester on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1646<sup>12</sup>. The last two phases of this siege were where the significance of the artillery was most evident.

The siege of Chester was fought between two key commanders, the Royalist Lord John Byron and the Parliamentary commander Sir William Brereton. Both armies fluctuated as troops came in to support a side and then left for battle elsewhere. Initially, Brereton had presumed that Chester would follow the rest of the county and join the

Parliamentarian cause; however the Royalist City Council ejected him from the city in August 1642<sup>13</sup>. Once ejected he was certain that Chester was a location, '*whose reduction will tend much to the settling of these parts and of Wales and may have great influence also upon Ireland*'. The city, under Sir Nicholas Byron, had already prepared for war and had arranged for men, arms and powder to be available on short notice<sup>14</sup>. Brereton started to move against Chester and seized Hawarden Castle in attempt to cut Chester off from outside relief. However before he could lay siege to it, Royalist troops from Oxford and Ireland under Lord John Byron, hereafter referred to as Byron, arrived<sup>15</sup>, forcing Brereton to withdraw.



John, 1st Lord Byron (Source: Licensed under Public domain via Wikimedia Commons)

Chester held an important strategic position geographically, as it was on one of the two main roads to the North of England, and also on the path to Northern Wales. Brereton mentioned how significant an effect '*the reducing of Chester may be to the whole of the North*'<sup>16</sup>. That the City was also a large port, and was England's main access to Ireland, made it a significant target worthy of attention from both sides. After the loss of Bristol, Chester had become the King's main port and access point for his army in Ireland<sup>17</sup>, making the city a pivotal location

for the Royalist cause. As the majority of the naval officers had declared for Parliament in 1642<sup>18</sup>, Chester was under a loose blockade by ships from Liverpool<sup>19</sup>. This meant that supplies and support by sea were possible but intermittent. With the exception of Beeston Castle, Chester was the sole royalist stronghold in Cheshire with the remainder of the county supporting Parliament. It was therefore believed that the city would fall quickly under a full siege, which led Brereton to comment to his commanders as early as March 1645 that it would be a short siege<sup>20</sup>. Chester itself sat on a ridge in the land surrounded by the River Dee. The walls of the city at the commencement of the Civil Wars were in a 'very ruinous' state, 'some part fallen down and in other parts ruddy to fall into further decay'.<sup>21</sup> The walls were repaired and extensive works were undertaken in 1642<sup>22</sup>.

There are many notable sources relating to the siege at Chester. Brereton's letter books are very useful, as not only do they contain his reports of the siege, but they included reports from spies and deserters as well as requests for supplies, troops etc. These letters showed how physically significant the bombardments were, their psychological effect on both the defenders and attackers, and how well supplied the Parliamentary ordnance was. The letters had various degrees of bias; letters to friends and allies were likely to show Brereton's needs and opinions, and a similar theme runs through the intercepted letters from the Royalists. Reports from spies and scouts had good quantitative information, but may of course be inaccurate. Unfortunately, these books are not a complete record, and there were many references to letters being sent or received that do not appear in the letter books. Randle Holme's writings on the siege provided a detailed account, especially when relating to number of artillery fired, the damage inflicted and the state of the populous. His work provided a view from within Royalist Chester, but lacks significant insight into the Parliamentary besieger. Nathaniel Lancaster gave an account from a Parliamentary viewpoint within Chester. Byron's accounts and letters in Brereton's

letter books also provided valuable information. Byron's own personal account contained several letters and useful pieces of information; it is possibly quite biased, being that it was written by Byron to justify the events that had occurred<sup>23</sup>. Byron's account seemed to record a large number of guns on the Parliamentary side, with numerous reports of guns being placed at different locations. It is quite possible he exaggerated these to make his defence look more impressive; however most of the arms were situated at known battery sites, areas where the wall is known to have come down or guns had been dismounted<sup>24</sup>. A small account from Mrs Alice Thornton also covered the earlier stages of the siege from a civilian's viewpoint, providing some small detail with little obvious bias, though her work contains negativity towards the Parliamentarians later on<sup>25</sup>. The archaeological record in Chester was incredibly detailed and many of the buildings and structures still remain.

Once the full bombardment started, it was notably intense in comparison to others during the Civil Wars. Indeed, Dore states that '*the city had been subjected to a bombardment that by Civil War standards was devastating, not a house in the four central streets was left undamaged and many civilians were killed*'<sup>26</sup>. The intensity of the bombardments had a large psychological effect. J. Werden wrote to Lady Salusbury '*only we have been kept waking, for the enemy hath shot day and night*'<sup>27</sup>. The psychological threat of the guns appeared to be quite severe, not only from the big guns but also the smaller guns that could fire over the wall. Byron states that the populous were '*so terrified by the great guns, and the small shot from St Johns steeple*'<sup>28</sup>. In one of the first days of bombardment, Byron claimed that nearly 400 cannon balls were fired at the city<sup>29</sup>, and Randle Holme gave a count of 357 '*tennis balls [that were] cast against our battlement*'<sup>30</sup>. This was a vast number of shots to be fired in one day, as Holme reported only 14 shots fired when the Parliamentary forces were attempting to breach the walls on 27th September 1645. This number of 357 was corroborated by a



letter in Brereton's letter books from M. Thelwall to his wife stating that *'they shot 356 cannon shots 1000 small shot at the least'*<sup>31</sup>. This was a significant amount for the 7 large guns that Brereton possessed. William Eldridge suggested in the *Gunner's Glass* that 20 shots would be a large number for a cannon to fire in one day and that 120 balls should be enough for 15 days of bombardment<sup>32</sup>. He did state that smaller guns could fire more often, but not substantially more – demi cannon 150 balls, quarter demi cannon (culverin) 170 balls and demi culverin 210 balls in 15 days<sup>33</sup>. During the later parts of the siege of Chester, it became apparent to the Parliamentary commanders that Chester would be very difficult to capture by direct attack. A decision was made by the Parliamentary force to change the artillery's tactic to one of bombardment rather than breaching<sup>34</sup>. This decision came around the time of a failed attempt to storm the city, which occurred on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 1645<sup>35</sup>. Before this change, small amounts of bombardment were used alongside breaching techniques. Randle Holme comments on shots being fired at the walls on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1645, then shots being fired into the church the next day<sup>36</sup>. The bombardment technique had been used, but not intensely, before the major change of focus. Brereton did say, after they had put a mortar into action, that:

*'To correct them in the city we have made use of our mortar piece and shot several granadoes into the town, all or most which have done execution. So it would be no difficult work to consume the city, but that would be no delight to us nor advantage, who much rather desire the reducement and preservation than ruin and destruction thereof.'*<sup>37</sup>

The main damage inflicted on the city was by two pieces of ordnance in particular; the mortar located at Foregate Street<sup>38</sup>, and the large gun on Brewers Hall Hill located on the Welsh (West) side of Chester<sup>39</sup>. Nathaniel Lancaster noted that there was a *'large cannon'* on the Welsh side of Chester. Lancaster stated that this large cannon was

much more effective than the ordnance on the North side, presumably those firing at Morgan's Mount<sup>40</sup>. Holme noted that the large cannon flanking them from the Welsh side inflicted a large amount of damage to both buildings and to the people about the city, and that it *'took them in the back during the storm'*. The significance of Brereton's artillery was perhaps reduced somewhat due to the lack of Siege guns. The description of an *'ideal artillery train'* from *A Short Treatise Concerning All Things Needfull in an Armye According to Modern Use* in 1660 stated it should contain 2 whole cannons, 8 demi cannons, 6 12lb field pieces, which would be demi-culverins, many smaller guns, 2 heavy mortars (100lb), 3 medium mortars (50lb) and 3 small mortars<sup>41</sup>. Holme accounts that Brereton only had 7 large pieces of ordnance; four pieces of ordnance placed against the North wall once the piece at Morgan's Mount was dismounted; two pieces at the east side, presumably either at the battery on Foregate Street or else at St John's Church, and the large cannon on the Welsh side at Brewers Hall Hill. It is also known from Brereton's requests that one of the large guns he had was a culverin, as he wrote to Liverpool, *'I desire that some of those whole culverin bullets, for which you have no suitable and which came for my use are remaining at Liverpool, may be likewise sent'*<sup>42</sup>. Thus he only had a maximum of 6 cannons comparable to the 10 he should have had. Brereton himself must have believed that he was underequipped, as he requested the *'great gun in Hawarden Castle'*<sup>43</sup> on May 5<sup>th</sup> 1645 and had it sent to him ten days later<sup>44</sup>. The *ideal artillery train* also stated that a besieging army should have 800 Grenadoes<sup>45</sup>. From Holme we know that the Parliamentary forces only fired around 70-80 grenadoes. On 18<sup>th</sup> December he said *'either their grenadoes are all spent or else too costly, and therefore to kill us with less charge, they toss three huge stones'*<sup>46</sup>. He later stated that on December 25<sup>th</sup>, *'Because it is a festival, instead of stones they send us in a token of four grenadoes sent in'*<sup>47</sup>, but this is the last time he mentions any grenadoes fired. There is an earlier account of grenadoes being sent over, Alice Thornton put the earliest bombardments

down at the 17th July 1643. Her account stated that 3 grenadoes were fired at Chester with one being put out and two landing outside the city walls<sup>48</sup>, and described 'a cannon bullet' flying toward the window facing St Marie's Church<sup>49</sup>. The siege only lasted between 17<sup>th</sup> July and 19<sup>th</sup> July 1643, brought to an end in her account by three grenadoes. She gives an account of one shot landing in Chester (where it was smothered to put it out), one landing outside the city, but in a ditch where it put itself out. The last actually landed 'amongst theire [the Parliamentarians] owne horrses, short of the towne, slaing many of them, and by that meanes the seige was raised'<sup>50</sup>. However, this seems to have been an unusual occurrence that was not replicated. Ward states that during the year of 1643 'the outworks were subjected to raids by Brereton's force but to no serious attack'<sup>51</sup>.



Sir William Brereton (Source: licensed under Public domain through Wikipedia Commons)

Fire was a serious threat to 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Artillery could cause fires both through heated shots and grenadoes setting fire when they explode. Porter stated that though the grenadoes 'did do considerable damage and destroyed some buildings no major fires were started'. This suggests that the fire damage was only minimal, and that it was the explosive properties of the Grenadoes that did the most damage. Brereton only made a few comments about buildings being set on fire, which supports this interpretation<sup>52</sup>, but he did say that 'the mortar piece have done

much destruction in breaking and rending'<sup>53</sup>. Charles Walley, however, stated that most of his property in Chester had been 'burnt to the ground'<sup>54</sup>. Holme supported this point of view, when he stated that when 11 grenadoes were fired over the walls they 'threaten to set the city, if not the world on fire'<sup>55</sup>. While it is likely that a few buildings were set on fire, including those belonging to Walley, it is unlikely that this had a large contribution to the damage inflicted by the ordnance. However, it was obviously a significant enough threat that Byron had several preventative measures put in place to prevent the spread of the fire<sup>56</sup>. Though fire was often caused by ordnance, it was not always the case. Holme reported that on October 30<sup>th</sup> the Parliamentarians attacked with bows and fire arrows<sup>57</sup>. This could imply that the 'revolutionary' ordnance was not viewed as that effective, though alternatively could be a last resort due to lack of ammunition for the big guns. Of course without having dominated the area with heavy ordnance first, they would not have been able to get close enough to use bows and arrows.

Brereton's artillery was not just intended to damage the city and panic its citizens. Heavy ordnance was designed to penetrate walls and create opportunities for assaults to be made on the location. By the end of the siege Holme wrote that the 'whole [of] our walls and edifices within the city were defaced or battered down by the destructive cannon'<sup>58</sup>. Though the walls were initially in a poor state, the delay in Chester being directly sieged gave time for Randle Holme esquire to improve the city's defences and build up the mounts<sup>59</sup>. Holme recorded the two times when breaches were successfully made. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1644, he reports that:

*'the east side of our walles neere to the new gate receive a visit from there artillery, beginning about twelve of the clock and continued till four - thirty-two shots are made them a breach at which ten men abreast may enter.'*<sup>60</sup>

Then on the 27<sup>th</sup> 'they let fly fourteen of their great shott at the Eastgate... They employed these

to work a reformation upon it and bring it low and uniform with her neighbour walls' <sup>61</sup>. These appear to be spontaneous events, as Holme did not report that these structures were damaged before the breach. A steady bombardment occurred at the Water Tower as well. Holme accounts showed that it was hit by 17 'huge balls' <sup>62</sup>, presumably Cannon or Cannon Royale shots from the battery at Brewers Hall Hill. This was followed the next day by another burst of 16 shots that caused serious damage to the water tower and cut their water pipes <sup>63</sup>. The damage to the water pipes was repaired the next day, however the bombardment continued. By the end of the siege, Holme reports 'the water tower at Dee bridge, shot downe in tyme of siege' <sup>64</sup>. The Water Tower was a medieval tower not reinforced by earth banks like the city walls <sup>65</sup>. The psychological effect of ordnance attempting a breach seems a great deal less than that of bombardment. During the particularly vicious day when over 300 shots were fired at the walls, Holme dismisses them as 357 of their 'tennis balls are cast against our battlement' <sup>66</sup>, a completely different image to the 17 'huge balls' that were fired at the houses days later.

Mortars are one of the main points of the siege that the populace and accounts dwelled on. This is to be expected, as by nature they affect the people inside a siege rather than just the defenders on the walls, but this also shows the mortars' prominence and significance in bringing a siege to an end. Holme wrote about the damage caused by the end of the siege:

*'Destruction of divers other houses in the cittie, with grenadoes, not a house from Eastgate to the middle of Watergate street on both sides but received some hurt by them, many sleyne by the fall of houses which were blown up, St. Peters Church much defaced and pews torne, and all windows broken by two grenadoes that fall therein.'* <sup>67</sup>

Holme's report on the situation is supported by council reports, which list Alderman Thomas Troppe's house that was worth

nearly £65 lost £15 of its value due to 'housing damaged by grenadoes'. Another tenant, Widow Streete, formerly paid him £13 for a house in St Peter's Parish, 'but one half of the house having been 'beaten downe by a grenado' it will not yield more than £5 over annum' <sup>68</sup>. In fact such was the extent of the damage that Brereton began to worry about the damage that they were causing. On 10<sup>th</sup> December he wrote 'yet this [the mortar] doth nothing at all work upon them but they seem still to remain as stubborn as formerly, so as to judge it more easy to fire and destroy than to reduce the city' <sup>69</sup>. Though after this letter he maintained the bombardment over the next five nights following 29 grenadoes were launched 'which break down divers houses in the Eastgate and Watergate streets' <sup>70</sup>. St Peter's Church had two grenadoes hit it; Holme told us that it was 'much defaced and pews torn, and all windows broken by two grenadoes that fell therein' <sup>71</sup>. Though significant damage could occur if wooden buildings received strikes from grenadoes, two direct hits to a large stone building has little damage to the structure. As well as having a devastating physical effect mortar fire, or more specifically the grenadoes that it could fire, had a huge psychological effect on the general populace. Holme reported on 10<sup>th</sup> November:

*'by this time they have unmused death and sweare theyle let him loose amongst us, a wide mouth'd mortarpiece in which the mouth of etna spits little mountaines in our faces and grinds our dwellings into dust and ashes, three of these bombards or huge stones light amongst us, and the day following three more, the uncapt houses crouch from feare, and beg forbearance on their bended knees, but it seems these but forerun a greater judgment. Two great grenadoes are by this time mounted, one of which being too full of spirits it becomes its own executioner, by pursting [bursting] in the aire, the other lights in a backside without doing any harme at all.'* <sup>72</sup>

Even though neither of these grenadoes managed to cause any damage, they created

such terror that, two days later, Holme recalled:

*'all this while our women like soe many she astronomers have so glewed their eyes to heaven in expectation of a second thunder that they cannot easily got to bed lest they dream of a grenado, and indeed, not without cause, for the very next night they toss us three grenadoes and one huge stone, but they do no harm at all to maintaine that miracles have a being.'*<sup>73</sup>

By 10<sup>th</sup> December the pressure from the grenadoes is reaching its zenith. Holme wrote 11 huge grenadoes are fired that *'threaten to set the city, if not the world on fire'* The Talbot just off Eastgate Street is destroyed. Two houses in Watergate Street are destroyed as well killing the people inside<sup>74</sup>. Brereton confirmed the damage sustained here but stated the fire was quickly put out. The danger of spontaneous fire from these devices seems to be a major part of the terror they inflict. Holme's narrative further revealed that on 27<sup>th</sup> November *'A great grenado is fired into one of the mills but is discovered and drowned in water'*<sup>75</sup>. This shows that the threat of fire and damage to the mill was worth the soldiers risking their lives to put out the grenade rather than evacuate the building. Though these terrifying effects are reduced when stones are fired from the mortar, for the night attack on 11th December Holme simply stated *'At night another three are stones are fired'*<sup>76</sup>. The significance of this weapon was obviously hamstrung by Brereton's lack of ability to obtain grenadoes for a constant siege. The indiscrimination of the weapon has a unique effect; to begin with Byron claimed that the mortar being fired at the city produced an anger at Parliament, and caused the citizens of Chester to become negatively disposed to the Parliamentary cause, however as time goes on he noted that the mortar fire drained the citizens morale and caused them to be angry at him for maintaining the resistance<sup>77</sup>.

The city walls at Chester, though they originated from a period of much earlier technology and were not built the way 17<sup>th</sup>

century defences were, managed to withstand substantial bombardment and still provided protection against the assaults on Chester. All the sources seem to agree that the walls began the war in a very ruinous state. The walls and defences were repaired and upgraded and changed at various points<sup>78</sup>, and were reinforced with a layer of earth placed behind them<sup>79</sup>. Byron stated that:

*'The wall of the City (the only fortification we had) was found generally to be very weak upon experiences of the former breach so soon and so easily made. Whereupon (for the better encouragement of others) I had begun not long before with some officers and Gentlemen to throw up a rampier [rampart] against the wall strengthening it....[it] was in short time brought to so good effect that the weakest parts of the wall were in most places well secured.'*<sup>80</sup>

These reinforced and repaired walls must have been of a fair height, as when the Parliamentarians tried an assault, Chester's walls were too high for the ladders to get up. Indeed there is an interesting report on the assault - *The Kings Forces totally routed by the Parliaments Army, under the command of Major Generall Poyntz and Cheshire Forces, on Routon-Heath ... together with the state of the Siege at Chester*, which is a Parliamentary report of the state of Chester, sent to Parliament. It describes a breach being made very quickly in Chester's walls on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 1645:

*'Upon the lords day we brought in our Artillery, fixt a battery, & upon Monday made a great breach in the wall, resolving to storm it at night, which we endeavoured in 3. Or 4. Places, but the Ladders proved too short and the breach too high on the inside.'*<sup>81</sup>

Though the walls were breached quickly, which would suggest they were not suitable as defences, they still remained enough to repel the Parliamentarians in a direct assault.

Lack of powder seems to have been a serious problem for both sides of the siege. Brereton



frequently wrote requesting additional money, in one instant, just after receiving £2000 as part of a payment, he wrote stating that he needed more as £1600 had already been spent on ammunition and that if he paid the remainder to the soldiers 'it would make their discontents greater'<sup>82</sup>. In Brereton's absence the 'Gentlemen' of Cheshire chastised the other commanders 'did you consider the mass of money that it hath cost in ammunition and in paying but a month's pay'<sup>83</sup>, which shows that ammunition was expensive and therefore bombardment required a steady flow of income to continue. The besieging forces were not the only ones suffering, for Brereton wrote that 'this town is scarce of powder'<sup>84</sup>; a later report showing that the Royalists were worried about their production and that due to the heavy bombardment 'They fear also for their...powder mills'<sup>85</sup>. A report from Brereton at the same time stated that 'there are three mills spoiled only two left standing'<sup>86</sup>, though this could have been referring to grain rather than gunpowder. Indeed it appears that the Royalists had little powder as early as May 1645. A letter from Captain Richard to Brereton on 18th May told of how the Rebecca (his ship) 'was at Chester and gave the town an alarm and shot into it with one of our guns. But by their slowness in shooting I conceive it may be very probably that they are slenderly provided with powder'<sup>87</sup>. This is a useful letter as it not only shows that the Royalists were suffering for lack of powder, but that they considered it was worth risking a ship to test the opposition's defences and armaments. A spy reported on Royalist attempts to obtain £150 of Brimstone (sulphur), one of the key ingredients in gunpowder<sup>88</sup>. That such efforts were taken to obtain powder, limit their opponents' powder and investigate its availability in the other camp shows that it was an important resource. Byron, throughout his report of the siege, constantly reported how little gunpowder he had available. Indeed he blamed his lack of powder on his inability to remove the musketeers in the steeple of St John's Church, he said:

*I endeavoured also ... to beat it [the steeple] down but, having only one piece of battery and that but a twelve-pounder, and finding that it would cause the expense of more powder than I could well spare was forced to give it over'.<sup>89</sup>*

In his report Byron appeared to put more emphasis on the lack of gunpowder and match than he does on any other resource, including food, artillery and troops.

The main factor in Chester's surrender seems to have been one of starvation, rather than subdual by artillery. Chester's lack of ammunition and ability to return fire helped the Parliamentarians surround Chester and keep control of its supplies. On 14<sup>th</sup> April 1645 Brereton proudly reported that he managed to get his force to establish batteries within ½ to ¾ mile from the outworks on the Cheshire side (east) and only ½ mile on the Welsh (west) Side<sup>90</sup>. This would have been a much more difficult task had the Royalists been in control of well-stocked artillery, as both of these would have easily been within cannon, demi-cannon or culverin range. As Brereton's soldiers' grip became tighter supplies became much more sought after. By 17th December 1645 a steady stream of defenders started to desert. Brereton's interrogations showed the problems within the city. Giles Hurst reported that:

*'the poor are in very great want and many that have lived well are begging, that there is but little bread or beer left and beef is scarce... The Welsh soldiers are almost famished and there is a general want amongst all, the gentry excepted... He thinks the city cannot hold out above a fortnight (there being little corn or malt left).'<sup>91</sup>*

If possible, John Fletcher presented an even more dire picture, 'the poorer sort are in extreme want and of late some of the Welsh soldiers have perished for want of food... The soldiers are much discontented and have twice mutinied of late'<sup>92</sup>. For the Royalists the lack of a gun at Morgan's mount was the beginning of the end, it allowed the

Parliamentarian lines to tighten, reducing the Royalists ability to sally and scavenge for food.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Carrington, P. (1994). *English Heritage Book of Chester*. Chester: Chester Archaeological Society, 65
- <sup>2</sup> *ibid*, 91
- <sup>3</sup> Easton, J. and Heke, D. (1999). *A Chester Miscellany: a collection of historical documents gleaned from The Cheshire Sheaf*, 26
- <sup>4</sup> Carrington, P. (1994), 84
- <sup>5</sup> Ward, S.W. (1987). *Excavations at Chester: the Civil War Siegeworks:1642-6*. Chester: Chester Archaeological Society, 2
- <sup>6</sup> Carrington, P. (1994), 85
- <sup>7</sup> *ibid*, 86
- <sup>8</sup> Barratt, J. (2003). *The Great Siege of Chester*. Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 62
- <sup>9</sup> Ward, S.W. (1987), 2
- <sup>10</sup> Barratt, J. (2003), 10
- <sup>11</sup> *ibid*, 10
- <sup>12</sup> Ward, S.W. (1987), 4
- <sup>13</sup> *ibid*, 2
- <sup>14</sup> Young, P. and Emberton, W. (1978). *Sieges of the Great Civil War*. London: HarperCollins, 108
- <sup>15</sup> Ward, S.W. (1987), 2
- <sup>16</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984). *The Letter Books of Sir William Brereton, Volume I: January 31st - May 29th, 1645*. The Record Society Of Lancashire And Cheshire, 397
- <sup>17</sup> Ward, S.W. (1987), 1
- <sup>18</sup> Burne, A.H. and Young, P. (1998). *The Great Civil War: a military history of the first Civil War, 1642-1646*. London: Windrush Press, 6
- <sup>19</sup> Wanklyn, M. and Jones, F. (2005). *A Military History of the English Civil War, 1642-1646: strategy and tactics*. London: Routledge, 133
- <sup>20</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 120
- <sup>21</sup> Young, P. and Emberton, W. (1978), 109
- <sup>22</sup> *ibid*, 109
- <sup>23</sup> Byron, J. (1971). John Byron's account of the siege of Chester 1645-1646. *The Cheshire Sheaf*, 4th series, 1-4
- <sup>24</sup> *ibid*, 1-21
- <sup>25</sup> Gardiner, S.R. (1876). *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton*. London: Academy Publishing Co, pp36-38
- <sup>26</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 585
- <sup>27</sup> *ibid*, 80
- <sup>28</sup> Byron, J. (1971), 9
- <sup>29</sup> Barratt, J. (2003). 112
- <sup>30</sup> Morris, R.H. and Lawson, P.H. (1924). *The Siege of Chester, 1643-1646*. Chester, 228
- <sup>31</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 93
- <sup>32</sup> Eldred, W. (1647). *The gunners glasse*, 118
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid*, 118
- <sup>34</sup> Carrington, P. (1994), 88
- <sup>35</sup> Dore, R.N. (1966). *The Civil Wars in Cheshire*. Chester: Cheshire Community Council, 53
- <sup>36</sup> Morris, R.H. and Lawson, P.H. (1924), 226-7
- <sup>37</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 335
- <sup>38</sup> Osborne, M. (2004). *Sieges and Fortifications of the Civil Wars in Britain*. Imprint unknown, 48
- <sup>39</sup> Ward, S.W. (1987), 12
- <sup>40</sup> Lewis, J. (1987). *The Siege of Chester, Nathaniel Lancaster's Narrative*. Raider Books, 22
- <sup>41</sup> Bull, S. (2008). *The Furie of the ordnance: artillery in the English civil wars*. Martlesham: Boydell Press, 188
- <sup>42</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 359
- <sup>43</sup> *ibid*, 364
- <sup>44</sup> *ibid*, 426
- <sup>45</sup> Bull, S. (2008), 188
- <sup>46</sup> Morris, R.H. and Lawson, P.H. (1924), 235
- <sup>47</sup> *ibid*, 235
- <sup>48</sup> Gardiner, S.R. (1876). *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton*. London: Academy Publishing Co., 32-33
- <sup>49</sup> *ibid*, 33
- <sup>50</sup> *ibid*, 32-33
- <sup>51</sup> Ward, S.W. (1987), 6-11
- <sup>52</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 335
- <sup>53</sup> *ibid*, 366
- <sup>54</sup> Sanders, F. (1896). *The Cheshire Sheath: Volume 1 Series 3*, 51
- <sup>55</sup> Morris, R.H. and Lawson, P.H. (1924), 234
- <sup>56</sup> Barratt, J. (2003), 136-7
- <sup>57</sup> Morris, R.H. and Lawson, P.H. (1924), 230
- <sup>58</sup> *ibid*, 204-5
- <sup>59</sup> *ibid*, 207
- <sup>60</sup> *ibid*, 225
- <sup>61</sup> *ibid*, 226
- <sup>62</sup> *ibid*, 228
- <sup>63</sup> *ibid*, 230
- <sup>64</sup> *ibid*, 204
- <sup>65</sup> Ward, S.W. (1987), 5
- <sup>66</sup> Morris, R.H. and Lawson, P.H. (1924), 229
- <sup>67</sup> *ibid*, 205
- <sup>68</sup> *ibid*, 205
- <sup>69</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 349-50
- <sup>70</sup> Morris, R.H. and Lawson, P.H. (1924), 235
- <sup>71</sup> *ibid*, 205
- <sup>72</sup> *ibid*, 231
- <sup>73</sup> *ibid*, 232
- <sup>74</sup> *ibid*, 234
- <sup>75</sup> *ibid*, 233
- <sup>76</sup> *ibid*, 235
- <sup>77</sup> Byron, J. (1971), 21
- <sup>78</sup> Ward, S.W. (1987), 5-11
- <sup>79</sup> *ibid*, 11
- <sup>80</sup> Byron, J. (1971), 13
- <sup>81</sup> Anon (1645). *The King's Forces Totally Routed by the Parliaments army*. Pamphlet, 4
- <sup>82</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 183-4
- <sup>83</sup> *ibid*, 330-1
- <sup>84</sup> *ibid*, 190
- <sup>85</sup> *ibid*, 211
- <sup>86</sup> *ibid*, 190
- <sup>87</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 454
- <sup>88</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 211
- <sup>89</sup> Byron, J. (1971), 23
- <sup>90</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 218-9
- <sup>91</sup> Dore, R.N. (1984), 374
- <sup>92</sup> *ibid*, 375